



ESSO WEEKLY MEMO –APRIL 7, 2011

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ACTION NEEDED

1. EIFA Family Advocacy Award

The EIFA would like to announce the opening of nominations for the 2011 EIFA Family Involvement Advocacy Award. It is the intent of this award to honor professionals who do not have a personal and/or family experience with Early Intervention service, but have provided outstanding support of meaningful family involvement on behalf of infants and toddlers and their families. Last year, the award was given to Meg McSweeney from Michigan. The award will again be presented at this year's National Office of Special Education Early Childhood conference.

Nominations need to be received for this award by 5-27-11. Letters of nomination and accompanying letters of support need to be submitted electronically to: eifamilyalliance@aol.com. To be eligible for this award, individuals or organizations must have engaged in activities that result in the following outcomes:

- The promotion of family involvement in local, state, or national Part C policy/program level activities.
- The engagement of family members in personnel preparation or collaborative training activities at the local, state, or national level that insures that providers understand and implement Part C family rights, understand and support the development of children, and participate fully and as equal members on their IFSP team.
- The promotion of family involvement in advocacy at the local, state, or national level that supports change in public policy which strengthens family involvement in Part C, increases or preserves funding, enhances service delivery, and/or improves public awareness of the needs of families and children enrolled in Part C.

To submit a nomination, please submit a letter containing the following information:

- Name, address, phone number, and email address of person submitting nomination
- Name, address, phone number, and email address of individual or organization being nominated. If an organization, please provide a primary contact name.
- Outcome which best matches the reason the individual or organization is being nominated
- Description of specific activities which resulted in significant family involvement in Part C.

- Letter of support for the nominee from at least one of the following:
 - § A family was supported through the individual or organization's efforts
 - § A member of the state ICC or other Part C advisory entities that can speak to the effects of the individual or organization's efforts
- For more information on the EIFA award, contact: Roxane Romanick at 701-258-7421 or romanick@bis.midco.net

IDEA Infant and Toddler Coordinators Association
6545 North Olney Street
Indianapolis, IN 46220-3723
317-251-0125
317-251-1510 (fax)
ideaitca@aol.com

2. OCALI Conference and Request for Proposals

The Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence (OCALI) will host the OCALI Conference in Columbus, Ohio on November 16–18, 2011. They have issued a request for proposals due on **April 11, 2011**. Presenters will receive complementary registration.

- Link: <http://conference.ocali.org/>

INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

3. Project SPARKLE (Supporting Parent Access to Resources Knowledge Linkages & Education) (With 1 Attachment)

The Florida Outreach Project (FOP) has been using a parent education curriculum, Project SPARKLE (Supporting Parent Access to Resources Knowledge Linkages & Education), to provide families with information they need. This curriculum contains a lot of specific information about hearing loss, vision loss, deaf-blindness, touch, concept development, and intervention with children who have multiple disabilities that include sensory loss. This curriculum is particularly useful to families of young children and families who have had recent diagnoses of hearing and vision loss. Please visit the FOP SPARKLE page <http://www.deafblind.ufl.edu/families/sparkle.htm> to see more information about the program. FOP welcomes professionals and families who may benefit from parent education on deaf-blindness to contact us at 352-273-7534 or 800-667-4042.

4. Month of the Military Child (With 1 Attachment)

April is the Month of the Military Child. This special celebration is a legacy of former Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger and was established to underscore the important role children play in the Armed Forces community. Military children are our nation's children. Care of military children sustains our fighting force and strengthens the health, security and safety of our nation's families and communities. It is important to emphasize and recognize the role that military children play while a parent or important adult is serving our country. The Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission and Florida's Military Compact Council remains committed to resolving the educational transitional issues that are faced by these children and their families. Attached is a recognition letter from Mark Needham, National Military Compact Commission Chairman, for you to disseminate to all school administrators, school counselors, school liaison officers and military families.

5. The First Report to Examine Hanen's More Than Words (With 1 Attachment)

The report is the first to examine this autism treatment – called [Hanen's More Than Words](#) – for children younger than 2 showing early signs of an autism spectrum disorder. Please see the attached press release for more information..

6. PSP Implementation Monitoring (With 1 Attachment)

The process for incorporating monitoring of the Primary Service Provider approach to service delivery within Continuous Improvement Planning is contained in the attached spreadsheet entitled, *PSP Target Monitoring Data Template.xls*. This data will give each Local Early Steps an idea of where they stand among all 15 LESs. Stay tuned as we finalize this analysis, craft contract language for this as well as finalize the targets using FSPSA reports for the quarter ending March 31, 2011.

7. Strategic Plan for Early Steps Sustainability (With 1 Attachment)

The current status of all the strategies and action steps contained in the *Strategic Plan for Early Steps Sustainability* is in the attached file entitled, *Sustainability Strategic Plan Status March 2011.xls*. Carol Roberts has done a tremendous job of creating an easily sortable document by each column. Before the end of next week, all the Entities Responsible who have a Priority of T (To Be Completed) will be receiving a list of their strategies and steps, and instructions for working with the Early Steps State Office on the plan. You will see that a lot is already in process (Priority C for Completed). More to come!

8. Statement by US Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Sebelius on National Autism Awareness Month

Every April we recognize National Autism Awareness Month and the special challenges faced by those with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). CDC estimates that an average of 1 in 110 children in the U.S. have an ASD. At the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, we continue to strive to meet the complex needs of all people with ASD and their families.

ASD symptoms range from mild to severe and the condition may pose significant communication and behavioral challenges. There is no cure, but we know that early intervention can greatly improve a child's development. The first three years are particularly critical. That's why we are educating more health professionals to recognize the signs and symptoms early, so children can get treatment when it is most likely to be effective.

Last year, we established a new national resource and information center to provide information on community-based services and interventions for people with ASD and their families. Last month, we announced a new website that provides job skills training for high school graduates who have ASD or other disabilities. New research funds are being used to deepen our understanding of ASD, test innovative treatments, study genes associated with ASD, and explore the needs of the growing number of adults with ASD.

The Affordable Care Act, the health care law signed a year ago by President Obama, will help ease the financial burden that often comes with treating and caring for people with ASD. The law requires new plans to cover autism screening and developmental assessments for children at no cost to parents, and allows parents to keep their children on their family health insurance until they turn 26. Insurers will also no longer be allowed to deny children coverage for a pre-existing condition such as ASD or to set arbitrary lifetime or annual limits on benefits.

This April, and all year, let us reflect on this urgent public health challenge and rededicate ourselves to addressing the needs of people and families with ASD.

For more information on the Department's efforts regarding ASD, please visit <http://www.hhs.gov/autism/> or <http://www.healthcare.gov/foryou/family/soon/index.html>

9. BDI 2 Data Manager Data Entry Alert

Please be aware of concerns about accurate data entry of BDI 2 assessment results in the online Data Manager system, particularly with regard to the Child ID and the Examiner Field (used in Florida to record information related to child outcomes

measurement.) These specific user-defined fields, which necessary for matching assessments for Child Outcomes, have had frequent errors. Please refer to the Draft BDI2 Data Manager Guide-Latest Edition on the TATS website for specific information. It can be found at http://www.tats.ucf.edu/docs/COMSM/DataManager_Guide_for_the_Florida_Birth-to-Five_Child_Outcomes_Measurement_System_071410.pdf.

10. NECTAC News

For the current issue of NECTAC eNotes go to <http://www.nectac.org/enotes/enotes.asp>